

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A process for preparing superabsorbent structures comprising:
 - (a) preparing a high internal phase water-in oil emulsion comprising, in its aqueous dispersed phase, at least one hydrophilic monomer in aqueous solution and an initiator,
 - (b) polymerizing the monomer in the aqueous dispersed phase to form a precursor polymer,
 - (c) mixing the water-in-oil emulsion containing the precursor polymer with a post crosslinker and, optionally a plasticizing agent,
 - (d) applying the emulsion resulting from step (c) onto a support material,
 - (e) allowing or inducing coalescence of the aqueous phase under conditions sufficient to allow the emulsion to form a homogeneous polymer gel structure, and
 - (f) drying and post crosslinking the formed gel material at a temperature sufficient to dry and cure the material, and
 - (g) optionally, post-treating the material obtained in step (f) by post-heat treating the material, by surface modifying the material, by surface post-crosslinking the material, or by any combination of these post-treatments.
2. (Original) A process for preparing superabsorbent structures comprising:
 - (a) preparing a high internal phase water-in oil emulsion containing, in its aqueous dispersed phase, a least one hydrophilic monomer in aqueous solution and a suitable initiator,

- (b) polymerizing the aqueous dispersed phase to form a precursor polymer,
- (c) mixing the water-in-oil emulsion containing the precursor polymer with a post-crosslinker, an inversion agent, and, optionally a plasticizing agent,
- (d) spreading or casting the emulsion resulting from step (c) on a support material into a film, shape or pattern,
- (e) allowing the spread or cast emulsion to invert from a water-in-oil emulsion into a oil-in-water emulsion for a time sufficient to allow the emulsion to invert and for the polymer material to form a homogeneous polymer gel structure, and
- (f) drying and post crosslinking the formed gel material at a temperature sufficient to dry and cure the material, and
- (g) optionally, post-treating the material obtained in step (f) by post-heat treating the material, by surface modifying the material, by surface post-crosslinking the material, or by any combination of these post-treatments.

3. (Original) A process according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein the inversion of the emulsion can be accomplished by 1) solvent extraction, 2) evaporation of the organic phase, 3) application of surfactant(s) having a high hydrophilic lipophilic balance (HLB), 4) application of low critical solution temperature solvents, or 5) application of metal oxide powders.

4. (Original) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the inversion of the emulsion is accomplished by solvent extraction.

5. (Original) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the inversion of the emulsion is accomplished by evaporation of the organic phase.

6. (Original) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the inversion of the emulsion is accomplished by the application of at least one surfactant having a high hydrophilic lipophilic balance (HLB).

7. (Currently Amended) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the inversion of the emulsion is accomplished by the application of at least one low critical solution temperature (solvent).

8. (Original) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the inversion of the emulsion is accomplished by the application of at least one metal oxide powder.

9. (Original) A film prepared by the process of Claims 1 or 2.

10. (Original) An absorbent article which comprises a superabsorbent polymer film or pattern prepared from a high internal phase polyelectrolyte prepared by the process of Claims 1 or 2.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (New) A process for preparing superabsorbent structures comprising:

(a) preparing a high internal phase water-in oil emulsion in its aqueous dispersed phase, a partially neutralized poly acrylic acid monomer in aqueous solution and a suitable initiator,

(b) polymerizing the aqueous dispersed phase to form a precursor polymer having a particle size of from about 0.1 to 100 microns,

(c) mixing the water-in-oil emulsion containing the precursor polymer with a post-crosslinker, an inversion agent, and, optionally a plasticizing agent,

(d) spreading or casting the emulsion resulting from step (c) on a support material into a film, shape or pattern,

(e) allowing the spread or cast emulsion to invert from a water-in-oil emulsion into a oil-in-water emulsion for a time sufficient to allow the emulsion to invert and for the polymer material to form a homogeneous polymer gel structure, and

(f) drying and post crosslinking the formed gel material at a temperature sufficient to dry and cure the material, and

(g) optionally, post-treating the material obtained in step (f) by

post-heat treating the material, by surface modifying the material, by surface post-crosslinking the material, or by any combination of these post-treatments.

14. (New) The process of Claim 13 wherein the particle size is from 1 to 30 microns.